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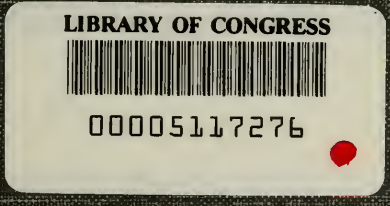

# *Who Won The Great War?*

The Revelations of the late

CORNELIUS VAN TROMP

Turned the Tide of

THE GREAT WAR

The Second Day of May, 1917

And Made Possible

THE VICTORY AT SEA

and

THE VICTORY ON LAND

---

*German Invocation:*

"The New Convoy System—Gott Straffe the Man Who Proposed it."

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## PROLOGUE

The New Convoy System, devised by William Russell Hinsdale of Orange, New Jersey, May 2nd, 1917, as an aggressive warfare against the German Submarines under the "Van Tromp Revelations," was described by the British Admiralty Board as a "New Science of accuracy and skill and without its loyal co-operation the enemy's submarine campaign must inevitably have attained its object."

Glaucus, an officer of high rank in the United States Navy has written an interesting analysis of the situation at that time. It will be noted that he, and all other writers quoted herein, have ascribed the winning of the Great War to this new science of accuracy and skill, extolled by the British Admiralty Board.

From the report of The Ship Protective Committee of the Naval Consulting Board of The United States, organized in 1915, Mr. Thomas A. Edison, President:

"There is no question that the most effective thing developed during the Great War for protecting vessels was the New Convoy System.

"The safeguarding of vessels by torpedo-boat destroyers was very efficient and with a sufficient number of destroyers, practically complete immunity from submarine attack was had."

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NOTE:—For a clear understanding of the crises of May 1st, 1917, as met by the Van Tromp Revelations of May 2nd, 1917, observe the dates respectively quoted herein.

# *The American Who Baited The German Submarine*

**BY DELT EDWARDS**

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War time secrets guarded carefully for more than two years by President Wilson, Secretary Daniels, David Lloyd George, Arthur J. Balfour and other high officials of the American and British navies are now revealed, disclosing that the Man Who Baited the German Submarine was an American—William Russell Hinsdale, of Orange, N. J. Mr. Hinsdale is a consulting engineer and metallurgist and well known in New Jersey and New York.

One month after the United States entered the war American, British and French officials in Washington were admitting publicly that the submarine situation was desperate. More than one million tons of shipping had been destroyed in April. Four hundred thousand tons had been sunk in one week. The U-boats were destroying and disabling more vessels than the combined efforts of Great Britian and America could offset. Every practical and scientific means suggested had been tried but found of no avail. The situation was growing worse daily.

France and England were urging the United States to send her troops to the battlefields. President Wilson favored it. The American General Staff advised against it. No such troop transportation ever had been attempted, and now the submarine stood a solid barrier against safe communication.

### Starting the war

On May 2, 1917, according to a series of communications which Mr Hinsdale has just been permitted to make public, the Orange engineer wrote to President Wilson explaining how the hopeless defensive warfare against the submarine could be turned into an aggressive, successful one. He knew the simplest secret. It lay in the weakness and limitations of the submarine. The undersea boat could not survive a six or eight inch shell exploded above, below or close beside it. The burst of the shell in the non-compressible water had the effect of driving a column of water like a steel shaft into the hull of the boat. Mr. Hinsdale was familiar with these limitations, and years before had helped Simon Lake launch his submarine enterprise, and, moreover, the German

submarine was an exact copy of its prototype, the American craft, for about fifteen years ago Mr. Lake had gone abroad to sell his craft to the German government, and Wilhelmstrasse, with charateristic astuteness, put off the purchase and retained the blueprints.

Mr. Hinsdale, adapting the new convoy system, to the limitations of the submarine, suggested to President Wilson that the whole undersea campaign should be reversed. He recommended that the submarine be sought, not evaded; that a bait in the shape of large numbers of ships moving in convoys properly protected by destroyers should be sent out; that the submarines should be tempted into the net and there destroyed with much more ease than they had been destroying.

### The Method Simple

The very next day, and twenty-four hours after officials of all the allied nations had taken a very gloomy view of the situation, Secretary Daniels announced that the submarine would be met "in a direct way." He asserted that he could not go into the details of the method, because by so doing he would be giving away the scheme to the Germans. The simplicity of the new method was one which would have been understood in a moment. Almost immediately after Secretary Daniels' announcement the first American destroyer flotilla was sent to Europe, arriving in Queenstown May 16. Within a few weeks the U-boats were scurrying out for the bait. Then came swift destruction. The back of the submarine peril was broken and the American troops swarmed across the seas by hundreds of thousands with a degree of safety that was marvelous. The whole campaign of frightfulness was changed almost over night.

For Germany, when America entered the war, was gloating, and well could gloat, over the victories of her undersea navy. She had staked practically the outcome of the war on her ability to choke off supplies to England and France, and the supplies were slowing up. She felt so confident that she risked the entry of the United States on the throw of the submarine dice. Even with America in, a little more submarine success, by which she would prevent the transportation of any considerable number of troops, would have meant practically a severance of the lines of communication, for the outcome of the world war now hung on the weight that America could throw into the balance. Germany gloried in the increased sinkings, from a mere 50,000 tons a month to close on to a million. She was beginning to glory in the deaths of American soldiers and British soldiers who became the victims of her U-boats. She openly boasted that the submarines were winning the war.

And in the words of no abler judge than Rear Admiral William S. Sims, commanding the American naval forces in European waters:—

"When we arrived in April, 1917, the Central Powers were winning the war, whether you knew it or not. There were 700,000 to 800,000 tons of shipping being lost each month and we did not know how to stop it.

**The Beresford Warning**

Recalling some of the more important conferences on the submarine immediately after the United States declared war, on May 1, Admiral Lord Beresford, speaking in London, voiced the appalling situation. He complained of the incompleteness of the official returns on the sinkings. He declared that he was inclined to risk the penalties of the Defense of the Realm act and tell the people the truth that they might realize the gravity of the situation. The same day British naval experts, accompanying a commission headed by Foreign Secretary Balfour in Washington, were impressing upon the American government the importance of moving as speedily as possible to stay the destruction. The French naval authorities were equally pessimistic.

That same day, May 1, before Mr. Hinsdale's letters were written, the situation engaged the attention not only of President Wilson but of a conference arranged by Secretary of State Lansing. This was attended by Mr. Balfour, Sir George Foster, acting Minister to Canada; Admiral de Chair, Sir Richard Crawford and others. Lord Eustace Percy, British trade expert, said:—

"The seriousness of the situation is shown by the fact that forty British vessels were sunk in the third week of April. The balance of the situation is the tonnage the United States can supply. But even the present rate of production of the United States and Great Britian does not equal the percentage of losses caused by submarine depredations. The output of merchant ships in the United States must be increased if the submarine menace is to be overcome."

In the afternoon of May 2, when Mr. Hinsdale was penning his first communication to President Wilson, the extreme gravity of the situation was being discussed at a meeting of the Cabinet in Washington. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, whose able and outspoken counsel was regarded most highly by the President, made the startling declaration to the State Councils of Defense that 400,000 tons of shipping had been destroyed by submarines in a previous week. At that rate, he said, it meant that

WILLIAM RUSSELL HINSDALE
Date of Writing The Van Tromp Revelations

Germany would send to the bottom 2,000,000 tons of shipping in the month—twice the amount that even the optimistic Berlin Admiralty started out to sink.

**Secretary Lansing Quoted**

Secretary Lansing himself, prone to talk openly and freely on few occasions, made the observation:—

"The people might as well wake up to the fact that the situation is serious."

Secretary Daniels, watching the submarine peril continually, said the navy had fully realized the seriousness of the menace for a long time and that with the coming of spring and longer days the loss of tonnage was steadily increasing.

"Germany appears determined to sink every ship she can in the barred zone," he said. "There can be no question about the seriousness of the menace. Our problem is to find something to counteract it. This we are endeavoring to do. For many weeks American Scientists have been at work on the problem. A large number of new devices have been tested. Most of them, at least eight out of every ten, have been found worthless. Every device that shows any promise is given further rigid tests."

Then he added:—

"Up to date nothing has been evolved which solves the problem presented by the submarine."

Herbert Hoover, returning from Europe, said:—"The increasing sinking by submarines in the last eight weeks shows the situation. It is serious, you can make sure of that."

By this time the menace had grown so that Germany was jubilant over the declarations and admissions. Her U-boats became practically surface boats with almost a free hand. They were increasing their cruising radius, and reports already had been received in Washington of 400-foot submarines with 6-inch guns. They were said to be cruising off the Azores, a thousand miles out in the Atlantic, and it was only a matter of progression before they would reach the Atlantic coast. Frequently U-boats hovered around in the ocean, waiting for supply ships, replenishing their provisions and fuel at will. Lying on the surface in comparative security, they took enormus toll. They sank their victims with their guns, instead of being compelled to launch the more or less uncertain torpedo. Sometimes they were engaged at destruction for hours. It was of no uncommon occurence for a submarine to come up leisurely, halt a ship, put out a boat, send a crew

aboard and place a bomb with a time fuse, return to the submarine and after the destruction of the ship open fire on the passengers in the small boats.

### Mr. Hinsdale Acts

Warring on the U-boats in the Seven Seas was an impossibility. It would require thousands of destroyers and the gain might be little. Mr. Hinsdale saw the futility of trying to search out the submarines and while the Cabinet was worrying over the situation and while Thomas A. Edison, Hudson Maxim and other great scientists were cudgelling their brains night and day to obtain an instrument that would defeat the submarine, Mr. Hinsdale turned to more practical methods. He thought the menace must be blocked with the means that were then at hand rather than by waiting for some miracle worker that might be discovered when it was too late.

Hence his letter to President Wilson, dated May 2. This read:—

"His Excellency the President of the United States:—

"The reported destruction of a German U-boat recently by a shot direct at the exposed periscope is not an unreasonable conclusion if the shot was an explosive shell.

"A six or eight inch shell exploded on the water immediately over a submarine boat lying several feet below the surface would effectually put the submarine out of commission, due to the downward thrust of a column of non-compressible water with the effect of a bar of steel, if suddenly forced downward on top of the submarine boat.

"In this connection I would suggest that the present policy of feeding valuable ships and their human lives and cargoes one by one to German monsters without quid pro quo of German U-boats in return is wrong in theory and procedure.

"This method of dealing with the problem without a systematic return warfare on the submarine is contrary to good policy, as the U-boats continue their depredations practically unmolested.

"A perfectly successful war on these German pirates could be waged by sending your freight and other steamers through the infested zone in fleets of twenty or more vessels convoyed by as many or more scout cruisers and torpedo boat destroyers disposed on either side of the fleet.

"At night the surface should be swept by numerous searchlights and day or night a shell or two should be dropped on any suspicious appearance indicating the vicinity of a periscope.

"This will act somewhat as a warning and as a deterrent to

active operations of U-boats. Should an attack be made and a torpedo launched a thousand eyes in all parts of the convoy and fleet are watching for indications of the passage of a torpedo through the water and its attendant wake will indicate its direction. Shells exploded in line of its advance would perhaps divert it from its intended course and other shells having been dropped as nearly as possible above the submarine if submerged or if on the surface, its destruction will have been accomplished.

"If a large number of submarines are encountered all of them will have been exposed to the destructive effect of shell fire.

"In the event that a successful torpedo should be launched the whereabouts of the U-boat will be disclosed and a dozen shots directed to its destruction and an injured ship will have ready help for passengers and crew.

"An increased number of enemy submarines will under such circumstances insure their destruction all the more and in a comparatively short time the present U-boat menace to navigation will have become a legend with some of my former dealings with pirates.

"Revealed by the late

"Cornelius Van Tromp."

Cornelius Van Tromp was the name of an old Dutch admiral in the seventeenth century who swept the seas of the pirates who were raiding the Dutch merchantmen.

**The President Acts**

President Wilson received this communication the very next morning, May 3, while the destructive submarine campaign was perhaps the most vital subject under discussion at Washington.

On May 3, Mr. Hinsdale wrote his second letter to the President. It read:

"His Excellency the President of the United States:—

"Hunting the German submarine is comparatively easy. The quarry, when found, is easily killed.

"You cannot hunt them successfully through the Seven Seas with cruisers or with seaplanes. Battle ships and dreadnoughts are unsuitable for the purpose. As I revealed to you yesterday, your quarry must be baited to draw it within killing distance. A single ship with a single gun is not enough. Seaplanes should aid the convoy.

"Ten submarines could not sink two vessels of the fleet I described to you yesterday. If they attempted it nine out of the ten submarines would be easily destroyed.

"Revealed by the late

"Cornelius Van Tromp." (He with the broom).

### Following the Advice

Pursuing his policy of information gained from actual knowledge of the submarine and its limitations, Mr. Hinsdale wrote again to President Wilson on May 4, 1917. All of his communications carried as a subject title the phrase "The Submarine or German U-boat Menace." This letter read:—

"His Excellency the President of the United States:—

"On May 3, I revealed to you that the hunting and killing of German submarines with the means you have at hand should be regarded as a sport and not as a fearsome task.

"The public should be regaled with cheerful tales of the prowess and skill of the huntsmen and not with shivering dread of an encounter with cowardly pirates who will make your people 'walk the plank' if they do not win, or fight to the death.

"Your allies should stop the rat holes whence the pirates come and then your task, or sport, as you choose to make it, will soon be over.

"Revealed by the late

"Cornelius Van Tromp."

Here was the first suggestion of an offensive against the great ports at Ostend and Zeebrugge, on the Flanders coast, whence the German submarine raiders were continually sweeping out into the North Sea and thence after the Alied Ships. The British navy soon thereafter began its preparations for raids on these two outlets. The heroic old Vindictive led three block ships to the Zeebruggee Mole and then engaged the Mole and shore batteries while the block ships went directly into the entrance of the Bruges Canal and there sank themselves. This contributed not only one of the most effective means of choking off the raiders but also wrote one of the most heroic stories of the war. Later the Vindictive led the block ships into Ostend Harbor.

### Writing Again

On May 8, 1917, Mr. Hinsdale, following up his communications, wrote again to President Wilson.

His Excellency the President of the United States:—

"In my revelations to you of recent date I suggested a fleet of vessels as a bait for submarines to bring the game within killing distance of the convoy of hunters.

"Five or seven such vessels may be properly convoyed by your fast cruisers and torpedo boat destroyers with economy and the number of vessels in the fleet may be increased when you see the success of the sport as I see it. And thus you may see and your

public will see that you do not need to wait for your modern miracle workers to delay your action. Instant results are demanded by present conditions and you have all the means at your command.

"Revealed by the late
"Cornelius Van Tromp."

Believing that he might just as well reveal his identity now Mr. Hinsdale sent the following letter to President Wilson, dated May 22, 1917:—

"His Excellency the President of the United States:—

"Lest we forget, and as a souvenir, I send you herewith a certified copy of 'Revelations' in re 'The Submarine or German U-boat Menace,' dated May 2, 1917. Faithfully yours.

"(Signed) W. R. HINSDALE."

Mr. Hinsdale also mailed copies of the Presidential communication to Secretary Daniels, Mr. Balfour, at Washington; Lloyd George and to the British Admiralty direct. Secretary Daniels acknowledged the receipt of the communications in the following letter, dated May 23, 1917, and written on his official stationery:—

"My Dear Mr. Hinsdale:—I have received your letters and thank you for sending me a copy of the articles you have sent to the President on 'The Submarine or U-boat Menace.'

"Sincerely yours,

"(Signed) JOSEPHUS DANIELS."

**Effect of Shells**

Mr. Hinsdale wrote to President Wilson as follows under date of May 28, 1917:—

"His Excellency the President of the United States:—

"In my communication to you under date of May 2, 1917, I wrote:—'A six or eight inch shell exploded on the water immediately over a submarine boat lying several feet below the surface would effectually put the submarine out of commission, due to the downward thrust of a column of non-compressible water with the effect of a bar of steel if suddenly forced downward on top of the submarine boat.'

"Many times it serves to break and open riveted joints and the submarine quickly fills with water, drowning all within.

"If the stroke is near the end the boat will be suddenly tilted, and in nearly all cases will spin over and over, mixing the crew up with the machinery, maiming and killing some or all of the occupants. A similar spinning and breaking of riveted joints will be the result if the shell is exploded close alongside the boat.

"A submarine two or three hundred feet in length furnishes a substantial mark for undersea exploding shells, and their use, under conditions I described to you, will render the U-boat operations too hazardous to last.

Faithfully yours,

"(Signed) W. R. HINSDALE."

Soon after the receipt of the fourth letter by President Wilson the first American destroyer flotilla was sent to Europe. It arrived in Queenstown May 16, and the young officer in command, when asked when he would be ready to go to sea, promptly replied:—

"We are ready now, sir."

Within a few weeks the new convoy plan was working well. Success was apparent immediately. The early reports from Admiral Sims read like fairy tales. Marine insurance dropped twenty-five per cent. The sinkings began to dwindle fast. April was the biggest month in the history of the submarine campaign, the second month after Germany had declared her ruthless campaign for all the seas. In March 61 vessels of over 1,600 tons were sunk, 28 of under 16,000 tons and 37 fishing vessels. In April 132 first class ships paid the toll, 52 second class and 41 fishers. The first week of May took 24 first class steamers and 22 second class. Then the sinkings decreased, 18 first class for each of the next three weeks and 5, 9 and 1 of the second class, respectively.

### The Figures

There were 115 first and second class vessels sunk in May, as against 184 in April. June saw a further falling off to 85 first class ships, 25 second class, or 110 in all. Eleven fishers were lost, but these were out all the time, practically without protection, for their value was nothing as compared to the more vital transports. In July the new convoy system was working perfectly and the rush of American troops was beginning to shape up. Only 82 first and second class vessels were sunk in that month; only 80 in August, the sinkings of the big ships dropping off more than twenty-five per cent. By September the troop transportation was well under way. Month by month the loss was scaled down, until by January, 1918, the submarine was little feared by the soldiers in the convoys. That month only 46 first and second class vessels, all of them supply ships, were sunk and seven fishers. And America then was using the gigantic German liners taken over. Even Germany's own figures, published to represent the greatest loss, showed a falling off of nearly thirty-three per cent. in sinkings between April and October.

On December 8, 1918, Secretary Daniels told a happy story of the navy's participation in the war. His report said:—

"The 'adoption' of the new convoy system was suggested by President Wilson shortly after our entrance into the war, and this convoy system was our major operation during the war and will in the future stand as a monument to the greatest and most difficult troop transportation effort ever conducted across seas, an anti-submarine convoy and escort system, the results of which have surpassed even the most sanguine expectations."

Mr. Hinsdale makes the claim only to having adapted the convoy system to the limitations of the submarine. No naval officer makes any such claim and the "adoption" of the scheme was suggested by the President, as Secretary 'Daniels' letter shows. Explaining why he thought the limitations of the submarine were not understood, Mr. Hinsdale said:—

"The German U-boat was a new and unfamiliar foe never before encountered in the world's history of wars, and while the convoy system of defense against the aggressiveness of surface fighting ships was old in the navigation of the seas, its adoption by the department at the time had not been deemed practicable owing to unfamiliarity with the limitations of the submarine boat, consequently the submarines for all practical purposes for the time being became surface boats and had a perfectly free hand in dealing with their victims.

**The Undersea Exploding Shell**

"The British navy had for some time been developing an 'undersea exploding shell' for use in their patrol system, but this availed them little until used in connection with the new convoy system.

"On May 2, 1917, after reading the report of Lloyd George on the sinkings of vessels by the German submarines for the month of April and realizing that the United States had been at war with Germany for nearly a month and yet no effective steps had been taken by our Navy Department nor by the navies of any of the Allies for a systematic warfare against the submarine, I wrote the Van Tromp revelations to induce the establishment of a new convoy system of defense.

"The practices of the Allies up to that time were generally understood and reported as that of 'patrolling,' as it was called, here and there at random, looking for U-boats everywhere except where they were doing the most serious damage, our vessels were being sent through the barred zone singly with instructions to com-

WILLIAM RUSSELL HINSDALE
In 1895, Date of Organizing Lake Submarine Co.

manders to try to dodge the submarines by steering a zig-zig course, developing their speed as much as possible. If two ships were in communicating distance of each other, one being attacked the commander of the other ship was under orders to escape if possible, leaving the passengers and crew to perish under the piratical attack, instead of going to the assistance of the stricken vessel. During this time the Navy Department was busily engaged in testing many secret and trivial devices with which to fight the mysterious and insidious foe.

"Under these circumstances the complete system of warfare described in the Van Tromp revelations was written by me and read by James L. Webb and A. D. Latchford in my offices in Newark and then forwarded to the President, the first letter being mailed at five o'clock in the afternoon of May 2, and the remaining letters mailed according to their respective dates."

**Who Mr. Hinsdale Is**

Mr. Hinsdale is known from one end of the country to the other through his engineering work. In 1894 he suggested the Duwamish River improvements for the State of Washington, which were carried out as he had planned—filling the tide lands, widening and deeping the river, building miles and miles of docks for manufacturing concerns, shipbuilding concerns, airaplane plants, steel mills, brick yards and sawmills. He was associated with William G. Fargo, president of the American Express Company, in the early 60's; then with the late General Henry W. Slocum in the promotion of the Merchants' Union Express Company, later consolidated with the American Express Company. He was instrumental in the checking of the great Chicago fire, where he was present from first to last and working with Colonel Starr on the staff of General Phil Sheridan, planned the blowing up of a number of private houses. After the fire he came to New York and became interested in the construction of a railroad from Newtown to Babylon, L. I., to form a connection between the north and south lines. In the summer of 1873 he submitted to Alexander T. Stewart a plan to reclaim the "great barrens," as the Hempstead plains were then known. Mr. Hinsdale supervised the building of many miles of roads and the construction of Garden City, with its hotel, cathedral and schools on the cathedral foundation. In the spring of 1880 he began the designing and construction of the great system of piping steam through the streets of New York, a method which today furnishes much of the heat and power for the great skyscrapers and other buildings in the lower part of the city. In 1888 he organized the American Tungsten Mining and Milling Company for the production of material for use in the

manufacture of self-hardening steel. And in 1895 he organized the Lake Submarine Company and was managing director. It was his knowledge of submarines that led to his adaptation of the new convoy system to drive the submarine from the sea.

## THE VAN TROMP "REVELATIONS"

The "Revelations" (Cornelius Van Tromp, the noted Pirate Killer of the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century), disclosed a specific adaptation of the convoy system into an aggressive warfare against the German submarine and a perfect defense for our transports and other ships in their passage through the barred zone and, by a prompt and in a unique manner, brought this aggressive and defensive method of submarine warfare to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief of our Navy, as well as the Navy Department of England on the afternoon of the second of May, 1917, while the world stood aghast and helpless before the frightful destruction of life and property by the unhindered pirates of Germany.

The British Admiralty Board says that the new convoy system, which played so important a part in frustrating the enemy's designs and in securing a safe passage for the army of the United States, carries with it a new science of accuracy and skill and without its loyal co-operation, the enemy's submarine campaign must inevitably have attained its object.

10 Downing Street, Whitehall, S. W., London,
June 28, 1917.

Dear Sir:—

I am desired by the Prime Minister to thank you for your courtesy in sending him the copies of your correspondence dealing with the submarine menace, together with the press extract on the same subject.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) F. L. STEVENSON.

W. R. Hinsdale, Esq.

In his address to the Rear Admirals and other officers summoned to hear him on board the Warship Pennsylvania, President Wilson disclaimed any technical knowledge that would enable him to say what steps should be taken to overcome the submarine menace.

His address was confidential and delivered August 11th, 1917, on the quarter-deck of the battleship, to Admiral Mayo and the officers of the fleet, assembled at Yorktown, Va.

"I have come here to say that I do not care where it comes

from. I do not care whether it comes from the youngest officer or the oldest, but I want the officers of this Navy to have the distinction of saying how this war is going to be won. I am saying that I want the youngest and most modest youngster in the service to tell us what we ought to do, if he knows what it is, if the oldest does not.

I wish that I could think and had the brains to think in the terms of marine warfare. I, for my part, am sorry to play so peaceful a part in the business as I myself am obliged to play.

Well! Nothing was ever done so systematically as nothing is being done now. America has always boasted that she could find men to do anything. She is the prize amateur nation of the world. Now, when it comes to doing new things and doing them well, I will back the amateur against the professional every time."

## PARAGRAPHS FROM THE WORLD'S WORK, IN "THE VICTORY AT SEA," ADMIRAL SIMS' OWN STORY

(Copyrighted)

"In the month of April, 1917, I had found the British Officials just about as distressed as the Germans were jubilant.

"Already the latter in sinking merchant ships had successes which almost equalled their own predictions; no adequate means of defense against the submarines had been devised, and the chiefs of the British Navy made no attempts to disguise their apprehension for the future.

"It is not too much to say that the responsibility for the safety of the British Empire rested upon Admiral Jellicoe's shoulders. As First Sea Lord, Jellicoe controlled the operations, not only of the Grand Fleet, but also of the entire British navy; he had no superior officer.

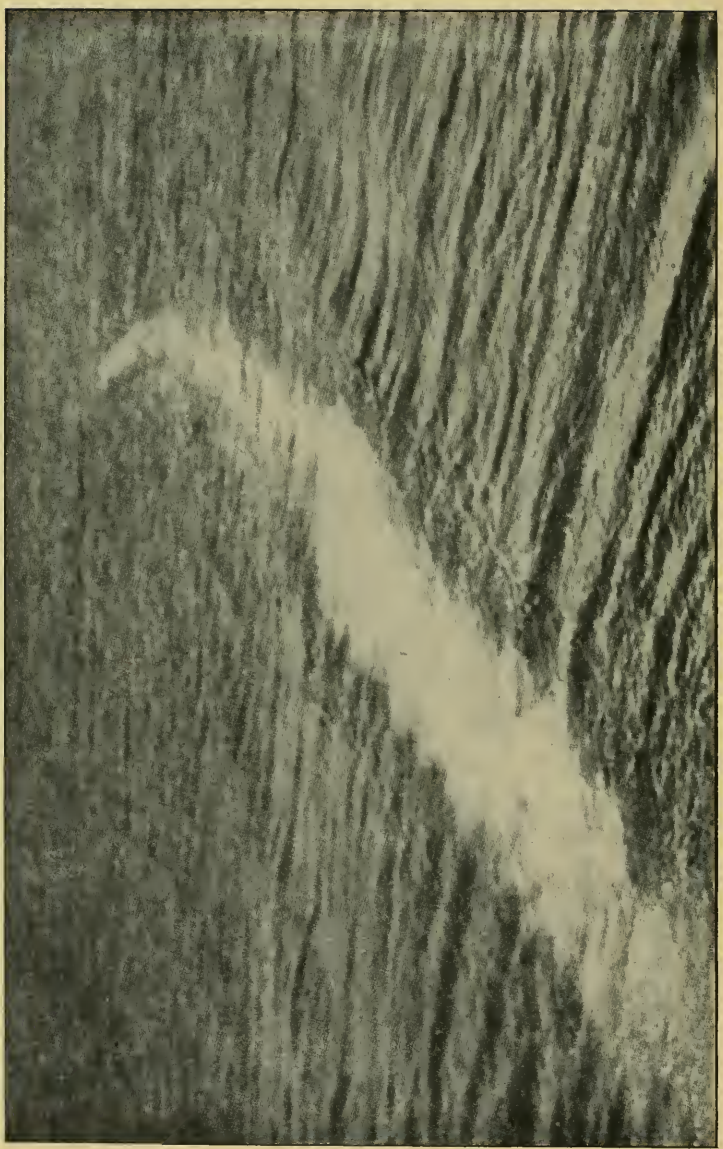
"After the usual greetings, Admiral Jellicoe took a paper out of his drawer and handed it to me. It was a record of tonnage losses for the last few months. I was fairly astounded; I had never imagined anything so terrible and I expressed my consternation to Admiral Jellicoe.

"Yes," he said, as quietly as though he were discussing the weather and not the future of the British Empire. "It is impossible for us to go on with the war if losses like this continue."

"It looks as though the Germans were winning the war, I remarked.

"They will win, unless we can stop these losses—and stop them soon," the Admiral replied.

"Such was the atmosphere of gloom which prevailed in Allied Councils in April, 1917.



The World's Work, Sims Own Story, Copyrighted Underwood & Underwood

THE WAKE OF A TORPEDO

This was the telltale sign which betrayed the presence of the submarine. It was a foamy disturbance, four or five feet wide, similar to that caused by the propeller of an ocean liner. As soon as the destroyer saw this wake, it ran up and dropped undersea exploding shells. at the end—obviously the place where the submarine was when the torpedo was fired.

"For the greater part of 1917, the German people believed that their submarines could bar the progress of the American Armies. By March of 1918, they had awakened from this delusion. Not only was the American Army, millions strong, in process of formation, but the alarming truth now dawned upon Germanic mind that they could be transported to Europe.

"Does any sane person believe that we could have put two million Americans into France had the German submarines maintained, until the Spring and Summer of 1918, the striking power which had been theirs in the Spring of 1917? Merely to state the question is to answer it.

"In that same twelve months we had gained much experience which was exceedingly valuable when we began transporting troops.

"The most efficacious protection to merchant shipping, the New Convoy, was similarly the greatest safeguard to our military transports. Those methods which had been so successfully used in shipping food, munitions and materials were now used in shipping soldiers.

"The sinking of a great transport with four or five thousand American boys on board, would have been a dreadful calamity and would have struck horror to the American people.

"No such army movement had ever before been attempted. The discouraging forecast made by a brilliant British Naval authority in July, 1917, reflected the ideas of many military people on both sides of the ocean.

"Admiral Von Man (German) took several submarines away from the trade routs and sent them into the transport zone, but they did not even succeed in attacking a single east-bound troop ship.

"In March, 1918, it became apparent that the German submarine campaign had failed. The prospect that faced the Allied forces at that time, when compared with the conditions which had faced them in April, 1917, forms one of the most impressive contrasts in history. In the first part of the earlier year the cause of the Allied Powers, and consequently the cause of Liberty throughout the world, had reached the point almost of desperation. On both land and sea the Germans seemed to hold the future in their hands.

"The results which the German submarines could accomplish seemed at that time to be simply a matter of mathematical calculation. The Germans figured that they could sink at least 1,000,000 tons a month, completely cut off Great Britian's supplies of food and war materials, and thus end the war by October or November of 1918.

"The seas presented two impressive spectacles in those terrible months of April, May and June, 1917. One was the comparative ease with which the German submarines were sinking merchant vessels.

"The Kaiser and his associates had figured that the war would end about July 1st or August 1st, and English officials with whom I came in contact placed the date at November 1, 1917, always provided of course that some method were not found for checking the submarines.

"How then could we defeat the submarines? In other words, how could we win the war?

"What was this strange new type of warfare that was bringing the Allied cause to its knees? Nothing like it had ever been known in recorded time. Nothing like it has been foreseen."

### Confirmation By Vice-Admiral Sims

(New York World, April 8, 1919)

"In April, 1917, the Central Powers were winning the war, whether you knew it or not. There were 700,000 to 800,000 tons of shipping being lost each month, and we did not know how to stop it. We had to adopt a new method. We established first the new convoy system; second, the depth charge ("Undersea Exploding Shell). The new convoy system might have been put into operation sooner than it was, but it had undergone a period of incorrect information."

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### "CONFESSIONS OF A U-BOAT CAPTAIN"

**One of Germany's Master Pirates, Captain of the U-71, Makes A Complete Confession. Restrictions Forbid the Publication of the German Captain's Name**

"After the New Convoy system had been developed, the American troop ships were so very thoroughly protected, that we simply had to leave them alone. Time and again we sighted them and would have made an attack had it not been for the very powerful escort. Naturally I would have been very glad to get a troop ship. I did everything possible to approach close enough to put out a torpedo or two, but I could not.

"There is a vast difference between being under fire on land and being under fire under water. Even if you are wounded on land, you have some chance, but if the submarine is wounded it is finished and badly finished.

"We always feared two destroyers that were in supporting distance of each other a great deal more than twice as much as one destroyer. Any skipper who attacked a convoy that was adequately escorted, that is had the right number of destroyers, ought to have a medal for bravery and a court martial for risking his own ship and crew.

"I believe that the very best defensive measures against submarines are destroyers and aircraft patrol.

"The submarines giving up the chase meant giving up the ghost also."

With blunt frankness, the Captain of the U-71 summed up the entire submarine situation thus: "The war ended just in time to save a few good U-boat skippers and their entire crews from destruction."

The Germans were unable to record a single successful troop ship attack on some seventeen thousand vessels that cleared from the United States with their hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

**(Editorial N. Y. World, May 4th, 1917)**

"The sinister aspect of the U-boat situation is not the losses of this week or last week or last month, but the fact that after more than two years of unceasing effort on the part of the British Admiralty no adequate method has been discovered of meeting the menace. Today the submarines are far more effective than they were at the beginning and no means of combating the menace has yet proved successful."

The Saturday Evening Post states that the new convoy system was instituted upon the insistance of the Americans, and submarine warfare changed from the defensive warfare the British have been making to the offensive warfare the Americans demanded with the new convoy system.

The American contention was that the patrol system of seeking submarines was not getting results, and that the real way to make the German U-boat warfare inoperative was to bring the U-boats to the ships rather than to send the ships out to find them. In other words, by concentrating the prizes the submarines were after into convoys and guarding these convoys the submarines would be obliged to come where the ships were instead of lying in wait for them to come one by one.

It is a matter of public record that in April and early in May the enormous loss of life and property by reason of the U-boats was effected by lying at will on the surface and sinking their helpless victims with their guns instead of torpedoes. Some-

times they were thus engaged at their leisure for hours at a time. One oil tanker required nearly four hours of this surface warfare before the tanker was finally overcome and sunk.

It was a common occurrence that some of the crew of a submarine boarded, and in some cases deliberately placed a bomb with a lighted fuse in position to sink the ship and leisurely returned to their submarine on the surface and afterward entertained their crews by deliberately sinking the small boats and their passengers with shots from their exposed deck guns. All these things could not have occurred under the New Convoy System of the Van Tromp Revelations.

Newark, New Jersey, April 7th, 1919.

Hon. Lloyd George, Premier of England, Paris, France.

I feel sure that you have marked your calendar of great events the second day of May, 1917, as the turning point of the War, because you know that on the first day of May, 1917, at Washington, the despatching of American troops to European battlefields was bitterly opposed by the American General Staff on account of the German Submarine Menace.

British naval experts accompanying the Commission headed by Foreign Secretary Balfour were urging the importance of finding some means of staying the destruction of the merchant marine of the world, carrying munitions and supplies to the Allied armies.

The French naval representatives were fully in accord with the pessimistic view their British ally held, unless some method was speedily devised to curtail the sinking of cargo ships in the German submarine zone. Lord Percy said the losses were greater than can be replaced.

The 'Van Tromp Revelations" of the second day of May, 1917, answered all arguments of the American General Staff against the sending of American troops to France, and the war was won.

Faithfully yours,

W. R. HINSDALE.

### The Westminister Gazette Says American Conquers U-boats

#### Life of Submarine War is Measured, says London Paper

London, May 26, 1917.—The Westminister Gazette publishes a message from a correspondent, who says the submarine menace is being mastered by a simple method, devised by an American.

"It is giving away no secret," the correspondent writes, "to say that the method, which is reputed to be infallible, requires

only a little time to come into full effect and wear the German submarines out. It is a model of simplicity. This resourceful American has worked along independent lines."

Lloyd George says: "By a method which is simplicity itself we already have the life of the U-boat campaign measured. Watch the returns."

Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the British Admiralty, reported the result of the adoption of the American Convoy System in place of the British patrol plan as follows:

"During the first part of the German unrestricted submarine war, fifty percent of the losses ocurred more than fifty miles from land. Today (March 6th, 1918) the losses outside the fifty mile limit have fallen to one per cent.

There is a growing reluctance on the part of the German crews to put to sea. The cause for their reluctance is obvious."

The Right Honorable Arthur James Balfour said, "Things were dark when I took that trip to America. The submarines were constantly on my mind. I could think of nothing but the number of ships they were sinking. At that time it certainly looked as though we were going to lose the war."

Newark, N. J., Feb. 4, 1919.

Hon. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy,
Washington.

My Dear Mr. Daniels:—

I am about to remove the ban of secrecy as to authorship and purpose of writing the "Van Tromp Revelations" addressed to the President, as commander-in-Chief of the Navy of the United States, and shall expect your co-operation.

Hon. Edward W. Gray, M. C., Representative from New Jersey proposing the introduction of a Joint Resolution in Congress recognizing my services, I have requested him to call upon you for a brief statement of facts of Historical interest in this connection merely.

Faithfully yours,
W. R. HINSDALE.

**Navy Department**

Washington, March 3, 1919.

My Dear Mr. Gray:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of recent date forwarding certain correspondence from Mr. W. R. Hinsdale claiming that he was responsible for the Government's adoption of the new convoy system.

Mr. Hinsdale's letters were considered by the Department.

As regards the convoy carrier, there was some question as to the proper method to employ to obtain the best results. By sending ships in convoys, the vessels of which are necessarily obliged to proceed at the same speed, much time was lost, and it was estimated that, neglecting the loss from submarines, a reduction of about twenty per cent. in the total carrying capacity of ships would be caused by the adoption of the new convoy system.

There was some difficulty, on account of the scarcity of suitable vessels for escort work. After a careful consideration of this subject, however, and after a study of the operations of our Allies, it was decided to dispatch cargo carriers in convoys also.

The Department appreciated the patriotic motives which inspired Mr. Hinsdale to make these suggestions.

(Signed) JOSEPHUS DANIELS.

The Hon. Edward Gray, M. C.
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

Newark, New Jersey, April 7th, 1919.

His Excellency the President of the United States, Paris, France.

My dear Mr. President: I am enclosing you a leaflet setting forth the authorship and purpose of writing the "Van Tromp Revelations," May 2nd, 1917.

I wish to direct your attention to the Leaflet as showing reasonable cause for delay of more than forty days after war was declared against the Empire of Germany before the Destroyers were used in a "perfectly successful war" on the German pirates, the success of which prompted Vice-Admiral Sims to write from London, April 10, 1918, "We will win or lose according to whether we beat the submarine or it beats us; we must depend chiefly upon destroyers for this. Destroyers on this side are worth their weight in gold."

Personal responsibility for the delay should not rest upon the President nor upon any subordinate in the Navy Department.

Faithfully yours,

W. R. HINSDALE.

Our Destroyer Flotilla was immediately dispatched to Queenstown, arriving on the 16th day of May, and forty days after our war with Germany began, reported as ready to commence operations under the inspiration of the Van Tromp Revelations; continued success followed.

The early reports from Admiral Sims read like a page from the Van Tromp Revelations, and confirm the accuracy of the

conclusions therein stated as to the conditions of a perfectly successful U-boat warfare, and under these conditions Marine Insurance was soon reduced 25 per cent.

In May, 1917, the Japanese, jointly with English vessels, were engaged in patrolling at various points in the Mediterranean Sea with little success in their search for German U-boats.

Soon after the receipt of the Van Tromp Revelations by Sir Arthur J. Balfour in Washington, the patrolling vessels in the Mediterranean were ordered to rendezous at Marseilles and convoy Merchant shipping in fleets, as the order stated, so long as the experiment proved a success.

Jellicoe admits that no high sea convoy was got into operation till late in May, 1917, when a convoy passed successfully to England from Gilbralter, and the first homeward bound Atlantic convoy started May 24, 1917.

Up to this date the "time honored" British convoys had been directed to protection from German Sea Raiders then infesting the high seas. Some of them were destroyed by British crusiers and many sought safety in ports of the United States and other neutral countries and were interned preventing their further damage to commerce.

### Prophecy and Fulfilment

The remarkable accuracy of the predications set forth in the Van Tromp Revelations, adapting the Convoy System to aggressive warfare on the German U-boats, having been so completely verified by evidence herewith from the reports of Rear Admiral Sims, Admiral Jellicoe, First Sea Lord of the British Navy, Von Tirpitz, Grand Admiral of the German Navy, and the graphically stated confessions of the Master Pirate Captain of the German U-boat 71, prompts me to direct special attention of the reader to a comparison of paragraphs indicative of the through knowledge of the subject by the writer on that fateful second day of May, 1917, which has prompted Rear Admiral Sims to say, "All this time that we were seeking a solution of the submarine problem, we really had that solution in our hands."

W. R. HINSDALE.

### By Alfred Von Tirpitz
### Grand Admiral of the German Navy

"In 1916 our U-boats could play havoc among the enemy merchant ships like wolves among sheep; later they had to fight

regular battles. A work of destruction had become a dangerous operation with many casualties. Americans turned the scale."

From the report of The Ship Protective Committee of The Naval Consulting Board of the United States, consisting of twenty-four noted scientists, with Mr. Thomas A. Edison as President.

Organized in 1915

"There is no question that the most effective thing developed during the Great War for protecting vessels was the New Convoy System."

"The safeguarding of vessels by torpedo-boat destroyers was very efficient and with a sufficient numbers of destroyers practically complete immunity from submarine attack was had."

## ENGLAND WAS NEAR TO DEFEAT BY U-BOATS

*Analysis of conditions at that time*
*Written by Glaucus, an Officer of high rank in the United States Navy*

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## *THE NEW CONVOY SYSTEM*

England's great battle ships and cruiser fleet could not fight the submarine any more than a bulldog can fight a salmon. The submarine will not stay and fight. Furthermore it is more than foolhardy for a big ship to remain in the vicinity of a submarine submerged, because the big ship cannot harm the submarine, as it cannot tell its location, and the big ship is helpless to avoid a torpedo when fired at short range. Once the submarine leaves the surface it disappears from sight, and despite all pretences to the contrary, it cannot be heard with any degree of accuracy or even reliability.

### Her First Weak Answer

So battle ships and cruisers, the monarchs of the sea, are helpless before the submarine in the same way that a prize fighter is helpless before a burglar with his automatic pistol drawn. The prize fighter cannot dodge a bullet.

England's reply was characteristic of her past sea strategy developed through countless years of controlling the sea highways —a concentration of warships to fight the submarine at the foci of trade routes, but this method, although it had brought success to England in the past, did not do so in this case and the reason was that "an enemy which fights in the open can be met and

defeated by superior surface force, but one that lurks in the depths of the sea cannot be subdued by those familiar means, but must be met by a new and more up to date method of attack." The patrol method was wasted effort, yet the Admiralty held to this method until forced by outside opinion to abandon it.

The consequence was that England in attempting to apply the old principle of concentration of force against the submarine found herself face to face with failure and her population and army faced with starvation, and all because the Admiralty was attempting to apply a well known principle in the old way without appreciating that, although the principle was applicable, yet the method of its application was wrong, owing to the changed characteristics of its enemy, and it was not until American counsel was added upon our joining the war that the Admiralty at last agreed to throw overboard the patrol system and adopt the new convoy system.

The British Admiralty's principle objection to convoy was that there were not enough of the proper types of warships to guard the convoys and that therefore submarines could concentrate and slaughter ships in convoy as wolves in a flock of sheep. This reason seemed sound in the British mind, but it was not, for the reason that the number of guards required was not as great as at first thought, and they soon found that many of the patrol war ships could be dispensed with and used to guard convoys. The new convoy system required careful planning to prevent contacts at sea at night or in fogs, but after all merchantmen were in convoy the risk of collision at sea was much less, for convoys travelling in one direction were given routes clear of those in another direction.

**England Finally Adopts the New Convoy System**

The underlying principle of the new convoy system may be explained by saying that it "brought the mountain to Mahomet." Before its adoption England permitted about twenty-five hundred cargo ships to arrive singly into her ports and about the same number to depart singly. This made a procession of ships passing and repassing over the same narrow sea routes. What a wonderful chance for the submarine!

To protect this never ending procession small patrol vessels of many types had been scattered over these narrow waters and their duty had been to attack the submarine when sighted. Insufficient numbers of patrols permitted ships to be torpedoed by the score weekly, while the patrol boats arrived only in time to rescue the crews after the ships had disappeared beneath the waves.

While the German was torpedoing or sinking by gunfire the

unescorted merchantman he was in no danger, for it was impossible for the few patrol boats to cover all the seas. It seemed therefore like play to the German. He was on the crest of the wave—winning—his morale was high. He saw the enemy's great ship sink without resistance. Should a patrol appear on the horizon, the submarine quietly passed from the insecurity of the surface to the more hospitable depths of the ocean, where no eye or ear could detect him.

### Playing the New Game!

But with the new convoy system—Gott straffe the man who proposed it!

This was entirely different from the game the submarines had with so much joy been playing. There existed now a very strong element of danger to the submarine. Besides, it put the submarine always on the defensive. There was seldom an opportunity to practise the offensive. The long suspense which the personnel endured while attacking a convoy, when only one person knew what was going on outside, and that one the captain at the periscope, began to gradually tell on the men. After each return to Germany they blessed their stars to be back and dreaded the coming of the day when they must again take part in those long dreaded attacks, when any moment an undersea exploding shell might destroy them. Many of their companions never returned, and this they could not help knowing. The vein of yellow began to grow and when the victories on land by the Allies began to be understood by the German people, this yellow streak again widened and suddenly we were shown the pitiful sight of a nation fully equipped in material giving in on account of a collapse of the morale in its personnel—not only the fighting men but of the nation behind them.

From the first day that this new method of convoying ships was adopted it was an unqualified success in defeating the submarine campaign. By August 1, 1917, more than 10,000 ships had been convoyed, with losses of only one half of 1 per cent. Up to that same date not a single ship which had left North American ports in convoy had been lost. By August 11th, 261 ships had been sent in convoy from North American ports, and of these only one had fallen a prey to the submarines. The new convoy gave few opportunities for encounters with submarines. I have already said that the great value of this system as a protection to shipping was that it compelled the underwater boats to fight their deadliest enemies, the destroyers, every time they tried to sink merchant ships in convoy, and they did not attempt this often on account

of the danger. There were destroyers commanders who spent months upon the open sea, convoying huge aggregations of cargo vessels, without even once seeing a submarine. To a great extent the new convoy system did its work in the same way that the Grand Fleet performed its indispensable service—silently, unobtrusively, making no dramatic bids for popular favor, and industriously plodding on, day after day, and month after month. All this time the world had its eyes fixed upon the stirring events of the Western Front, almost unconscious of the existence of the forces that made those land operations possible. Yet a few statistics eloquently disclose the part played by the new convoy system in winning the war. In the latter months of the struggle from 91 to 92 per cent. of Allied shipping sailed in convoys. The losses in these convoys were less than 1 per cent. And this figure includes the ships lost after the dispersal of the convoys: in convoys actually under destroyer escort the losses were less than one half of 1 per cent.

Up to the time of the Armistice, despite all the assistance rendered to the navies by the best scientific brains of the world, no sure means had been found of keeping track of the submarine once he submerged. The new convoy system was, therefore, our only method of bringing him into action."

The Revelations of the late Cornelius Van Tromp settled the status of the submarine for war purposes, showing that capital ships and transports need not fear submarines when under convoy of destroyers.

The limitations of the submarine boat, as shown by the recent loss of a large modern submarine of the British Navy with fifty-two officers and men when making a practice dive, are disclosed in the "Chartless Course of the Submarine."

### The Chartless Course of the Submarine Boat

Lying on the surface, the submarine boat has the stability and buoyancy of a surface boat of the same lines and weight. It is amenable to the forces and physical laws governing the surface vessel buffeted by the winds and waves, but when submerged, new laws intervene and the limitations of the undersea boat become apparent.

It cannot lie at rest answering to the winds and waves as it did while on the surface, but must have an uninterrupted motion through a succession of impulses from its engines and propellers, directed by its steering and diving rudders. It brooks no delay on the part of its propellers.

It is obvious that in the construction of a submarine boat it is impracticable to so build it and locate engines and other machinery, storage batteries, ballast, supplies, etc., that its centre of gravity shall coincide with its centre of form, therefore to keep it on a comparatively even keel fore and aft, the diving rudders must be continually manipulated, as the tendency of the heaviest end to sink must be continually overcome by the diving rudders and uninterrupted forward motion of the submerged boat. Thus the course of the submerged boat viewed horizontally will be a succession of waves and not a level line, although the water may be comparatively still.

The "undersea exploding shell," first particularly described in the Van Tromp Revelations, would, if exploded within a short distance from the submerged boat, either above, below or alongside, disable its engines, rudders, propellers, one or all of them checking its forward motion, when the heavier end would immediately begin to sink, and the commander and crew could not even bring their boat to the surface for surrender, but must sink to the bottom of the sea with no escape possible. If the ocean at that place should be sufficiently deep, the sides of the subermine would be crushed in by pressure unless the boat should perhaps be protected from collapse by reason of its having been filled with water through the breaking of rivetted joints: in either case the officers and crew must suffer a horrible death. Cases have been noted from salvaged submarines where the occupants had evidently fought with each other in their madness preceding the catastrophe.

This, the ghastly sequel to the Van Tromp Revelations.

### Atlantic Coast Defense

His Excellency The President of the United States:—

February 15, 1918.

By the Author of the "Van Tromp Revelations" in re

The German Submarine Menace

Sir:—

It is not generally understood that our Atlantic coast is peculiarly adapted for defense against attacks by submarines owing to the comparatively shallow water for a considerable distance from the shore. The depth increases on an average of only seven and one-half feet to the mile.

The bottom is very even from North to South, excepting at the mouths of rivers, harbors and estuaries, and is composed of a hard white or gray sand extending from Newfoundland to the

Florida Keys, and off shore to the Gulf Stream, with the exceptions noted.

Under these conditions an enemy U-boat cannot readily submerge by diving, near enough inshore to have used its guns against coast cities, with serious effect. The transparent waters permit the defending vessels and aeroplanes to locate and destroy the enemy submarine, with great precision, as the U-boat cannot sink to the obscurity of deep water.

With harbor defenses our Atlantic coast is practically immune from U-boat raids.

The reported increase in the size of the German submarines recently built only serves to accentuate the immunity claimed—they are as easily killed as the smaller submarines.

Faithfully yours,

W. R. HINSDALE.

Note:—An impressive verification of statements contained in the foregoing letter was furnished when the crew of American submarine S-5 executed their "Crash Dive," fifty-five miles off Cape Henlopen, from which they were rescued September 3, 1920, after being held in great peril head downward in the sand beneath the Atlantic ocean for nearly two days.

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10, Downing Street
Whitehall, S.W.1.

27th. September, 1917.

Dear Sir,

I am desired by the Prime Minister to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th. instant, and to say that the matter will receive attention.

Yours faithfully,

F L Stevenson

W.R. Hinsdale, Esq.,

W 92 5

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